

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 SR-02 ORM-01 EUR-12 AGR-05 EB-07 COME-00

TRSE-00 /093 W

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R 021308Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3302

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

USMISSION GENEVA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0385

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SWEL, SREF, ET

SUBJ: RELIEF ACTIVITIES IN ASMARA

REF: ASMARA 0371

1. ON 2 APRIL, ECON/COMM OFF ACCOMPANIED ECON/COMM ASST ON LATTER'S ROUNDS AS SECRETARY OF RELIGIOUS RELIEF SERVICES ASMARA (RRSA). RRSA IS AN INTERFAITH COMMUNITY GROUP FORMED IN EARLY MARCH, DEDICATED TO HELPING SUFFERING PEOPLE IN ASMARA. THE RRSA HAS AN ELEVEN MEMBER EXEC COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF BOTH CHRISTIANS AND MOS-LEMS.

2. THE RRSA OPERATES 13 DISTRIBUTION CENTERS COVERING 30 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS IN ASMARA. OVER PAST MONTH GROUP HAS COLLECTED 4000 QUINTALS OF SORGHUM FROM PHILANTHROPISTS (GRAIN MERCHANTS) IN ASMARA AND DISTRIBUTED IT TO 20,000 NEEDY FAMILIES (60,000 PEOPLE). NEIGHBORHOOD COMMITTEES POLL THEIR AREAS AND COMPOSE
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LISTS OF THE NEEDY. THE CRITERIA IN ORDER OF NEED ARE : 1) THOSE

WHO HAD NO WORK/INCOME PRIOR TO HOSTILITIES, 2) THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE JOBS OR INCOME DUE TO HOSTILITIES, AND 3) THOSE WHO HAVE INSUFFICIENT INCOME. DURING COURSE OF VISITS TODAY RRSA SECRETARY REPRIMANDED WORKERS AT SOME DISTRIBUTION CENTERS FOR BEING TOO LIBERAL IN COMPOSITION OF NEEDY LIST, WHICH RESULTED IN "INDISCRIMINATE DISTRIBUTION".

3. ACCORDING TO THE RRSA SECRETARY, THE EPMG HAS DISTRIBUTED 50 QUINTALS OF WHEAT, OUT OF 19,000 NATIONALIZED FROM PRIVATE ERITREAN RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ASSOC, TO VILLAGERS IN QUA ZEIN, (20 KLMS NORTH OF ASMARA). THIS GRAIN WAS ORIGINALLY DONATED FOR FAMINE RELIEF LEAST YEAR BY CANADA. THE ORIGINAL TOTAL WAS 40,000 QUINTALS OF WHEAT. APPROX 21,000 HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTED EARLIER IN ERITREA BY RELIEF REHABILITATION ASSOC. RRSA SECRETARY PRESENTLY AFRAID THAT IF EPMG BECOMES FULLY AWARE OF RRSA, IT WILL NATIONALIZE ITS ASSETS, AND THAT DISTRIBUTION EFFORTS WILL TAPER OFF.

4. INTERNATIONAL DONORS WHO WISH TO PROVIDE RELIEF SUPPLIES (GRAIN & MEDICINE) TO THE EPMG FOR USE IN ERITREA SHOULD BE FULLY COGNIZANT OF BUREAUCRATIC RED TAPE AND EPMG SUSPICIONS THAT COULD IMPEDE DISTRIBUTION, EVEN AFTER SUPPLIES ARRIVE IN ASMARA.

5. EXISTENCE THIS PRIVATE EFFORT SHOULD BE CLOSELY HELD.
SHERRY

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, RELIEF (ASSISTANCE)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ASMARA00385
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750114-0672
From: ASMARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750491/aaaadexi.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ASMARA 0371
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <20 OCT 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RELIEF ACTIVITIES IN ASMARA
TAGS: SWEL, SREF, ET, ICRC
To: STATE GENEVA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006